

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PGOV PINT PO

SUBJ: GOP BEGINS NAMING NEW CIVIL GOVERNORS

USUN FOR AMB SCOTT

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION HAS APPOINTED SIX NEW CIVIL GOVERNORS IN BEGINNING OF PROCESS TO FILL VACANCIES CREATED BY DISMISSAL APRIL 25 OF ALL INCUMBENTS. IT APPEARS AS IF POLITICAL CENTRISTS, INDEPENDENTS AND SOCIALISTS WILL BE CHOSEN FOR BULK OF JOBS AND THAT COMMUNISTS WILL NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM CIVIL GOVERNORSHIPS. NEW APPOINTEES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE AMONG OTHER THINGS FOR OVERSEEING NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS AND FOR ENSURING THEY ARE CONDUCTED EQUITABLY AND HONESTLY. END SUMMARY.

1. MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, LTCOL MANUEL DA COSTA BRAS, HAS BEGUN NAMING NEW CIVIL GOVERNORS TO FILL VACANCIES IN ALL 18 DISTRICTS IN CONTINENT AND IN 4 AUTONOMOUS DISTRICTS IN ADJACENT ISLANDS. SO FAR SIX POSITIONS FILLED.

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(BIO INFORMATION ON NEW APPOINTEES FOLLOWS IN SEPTTEL).

JOBS HAVE REMAINED VACANT SINCE APRIL 25 WHEN ALL CIVIL GOVERNORS AND THEIR SUBSTITUTES DISMISSED BY JUNTA IN DECREE LAW 170/74. SINCE THAT TIME SECRETARIES HAVE SERVED IN STOPGAP FASHION AS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REPS IN DISTRICTS (JURISDICTIONS WHICH ARE IN SOME RESPECTS EQUIVALENT TO STATES IN THE UNITED STATES).

2. BY EXISTING LAW CIVIL GOVERNORS ARE IMMEDIATE AND RANKING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE REPRESENTATIVES IN EACH DISTRICT, AND SERVE AT PLEASURE OF MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, WHO MAY HIRE AND FIRE THEM AT WILL. BASICALLY, CIVIL GOVERNORS PERFORM TWO TYPES OF WORK: ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICE.

3. IN THEIR CAPACITY AS ADMINISTRATORS THEY: KEEP LISBON INFORMED BIWEEKLY OF ANYTHING OF INTEREST HAPPENING IN THEIR DISTRICT; TRANSMIT TO APPROPRIATE MINISTRIES PETITIONS, DOCUMENTS, ETC., GIVEN THEM BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CITIZENS; KEEP LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMED OF NEW LAWS, REGULATIONS, ETC., AND PROVIDE SUCH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON CARRYING THEM OUT; INSPECT AND REGULATE IN VARIOUS AREAS ACCORDING TO EXISTING LAW; AND RESOLVE LOCAL DISPUTES BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.

4. MOST IMPORTANT FROM A POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW, GOVERNORS SUPERVISE ELECTIONS FOR PARISH BOARDS (JUNTAS DA FREGUESIA) AND CITY GOVERNMENT (CAMARAS MUNICIPAIS). IN PAST GOVERNORS HAVE OVERSEEN DRAWING UP OF VOTING LISTS THROUGHOUT THEIR DOMAIN BUT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THIS WILL BE DONE BY COMPUTER AUTOMATICALLY IN FUTURE. GOVERNORS ARE ALSO EMPOWERED TO PROHIBIT OR SANCTION MEETINGS, CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF ALL TYPES (INCLUDING POLITICAL) AND KEEP A WATCH OVER HOW THEY FUNCTION.

5. GOVERNOR, IN ADDITION, IS SUPREME POLICE AUTHORITY IN HIS DISTRICT. HE IS SUPERVISOR OF MILITARIZED POLICE FORCES (POLICIA DE SEGURANCA PUBLICA-PSP) IN HIS AREA, AND IS GRANTED POWER TO DO ALL NECESSARY (INCLUDING REQUISITIONING OF NATIONAL GUARD -GNR- OR ARMED FORCES IN EXTREME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMERGENCIES) TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY IN DISTRICT. HIS POLICE DUTIES RUN GAMUT FROM SUPER-INTENDING RELIGIOUS CULTS TO ISSUING PASSPORTS AND SUPERVISING FOREIGNERS IN THE AREA.

6. PROCESS WHEREBY GOVERNOR PICKED IS AS FOLLOWS: PPD, COMMUNISTS, SOCIALIST AND MDP GET TOGETHER IN EACH DISTRICT AND TRY TO AGREE ON A SINGLE CANDIDATE TO PRESENT

TO THE MINISTER. IF THIS PROVES IMPOSSIBLE, EACH PARTY OR GROUP SENDS ONE OR MORE NAMES OF CANDIDATES TO THE MINISTER. MINISTER THEN MAKES HIS SELECTION, AND SEEKS APPROVAL OF SIX-MAN CABINET SUBCOMMITTEE FOR HIS CHOICE. VOTING IS BY SIMPLE MAJORITY. WE UNDERSTAND THAT COUNCIL OF STATE HAS NOT INVOLVED ITSELF IN SELECTION PROCESS.

7. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND FROM CHEFE DE GABINETE OF MAGALHAES MOTA (FORMER MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION) THAT MEMBERS OF PPD AND SOCIALIST PARTY, AS WELL AS POLITICAL INDEPENDENTS, WILL BE PICKED TO FILL MOST SLOTS. PRIMARY INTEREST OF GOP IS TO SELECT COMPETENT ADMINISTRATORS, WHICH IS NOT COMMUNIST STRONG SUIT. HENCE FEW OF THEM WILL BE PICKED, ACCORDING TO LUIS HANDIM CARVALHO, NEW UNDERSECRETARY FOR INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION. HOWEVER CARVALHO SAYS ONE SUSPECTED COMMUNIST NOW CHOSEN, AND OTHERS MAY BE. A NUMBER OF MILITARY OFFICERS WILL BE SELECTED TO HEAD SOME DISTRICTS.

8. NEW APPOINTEES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT HONSTLY AND EQUITABLY, WITH NONE OF THE FRAUD WHICH HAS HERETOFORE CHARACTERIZED PORTUGUESE ELECTORAL PROCESS. HOWEVER THERE WILL BE MUCH LEGAL ROOM FOR POLITICKING, AS GOVERNOR CAN IN HIS ROLE AS A SORT OF "WALKING NEWSLETTER" INTERPRET HAPPENINGS, NEW LAWS, ETC., IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BENEFIT PARTY WITH WHICH HE MOST IN SYMPATHY. FACT THAT GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN SO LONG TO SELECT NEW APPOINTEES PERHAPS REFLECTS ITS DESIRE TO PICK INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL WIELD THE CONSIDERABLE POWERS VESTED IN CIVIL GOVERNORSHIP IN AS APOLITICAL, EVEN-HANDED A MANNER AS POSSIBLE. DELAY ALSO REFLECTS DIFFICULTIES POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE HAD IN COMING TO CONSENSUS ON CANDIDATES, AND IS PARTLY A RESULT OF RECENT GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE OVER AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSEQUENT ADMINISTRATIVE TURMOIL.
POST

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